পৰ্বত উপৰ ভমৰা জে সূতন

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The Science of Words

Gajendra Thakur

VIDEHA- Maithili Fortnightly eJournal (From Videha www.videha.co.in)
Archive

ISSN 2229-547X VIDEHA



विदेह मैथिली साहित्य आन्दोलन: मानुषीमिह संस्कृताम्



कवर डिजाइन (फ्रण्ट आ बैक): ओम गजेन्द्र ठाकुर

(C) A collection of Maithili Seed Stories, Short Stories and Long Stories by Gajendra Thakur translated into English by the author himself (Language-English) *from Videha www.videha.co.in Archive.*

Annexure

(Maithili Short-Stories by Gajendra Thakur translated into English by the author himself)

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Annexure One

The Proven Mahavir (Siddha Mahavir)

1

Beside the road was Anmana Didi's house.

It was a hut, not a house. In every courtyard of the village, there happens to be a house of a widow. But when the family expands, some members increase the front of their house while others encircle their homes with new constructions. And thus, the latitude and longitude of that widow's home get changed, and that was what happened to Anmana Didi's house.

Anmana Didi's house is now beside the road. She is originally from the other side's majkothia (middle) quarter of the village, but her house has now shifted to near my house. There are always a lot of people to be found in her house. The girls who stay nearby visit Anmana Didi's house during the day, especially at midday, to check her head for lice.

Nobody knows who her closest relation is; that will become clear only after she dies. During the funeral rites, whoever is her nearest as per her clan, would perform the last rites and he would also get Anmana Didi's house and land.

But that is no longer possible. When Anmana Didi had gone to her in-laws' village, where she was married i.e., in Jhanjharpur, she had adopted her sister's son. But the love for her father's village remains in her heart.

She comes to her hut nowadays once a month at least. She cooks for herself. But at Jhanjharpur, she has a big house and a huge courtyard. But she has not invited her son and daughter-in-law even once to her father's village.

The entire village calls her 'didi' when she resides in her father's village and 'aunty' when she stays in her husband's village i.e., Jhanjharpur.

So, she is now known as Anmana Didi by the whole village.

Beside the hut, she constructed a temple of Mahavir Bajrangwali. Though initially, it was just a mud building, she has gradually made it a pucca by selling grains. Earlier it was a 'hut-temple'. Whenever Anmana Didi went to Jhanjharpur, she just closed the gate of her hut. Later, she started locking it with a chain and lock. But the temple of Bajrangwali remained open for people, all the time. The girls of the village did all the cleaning work.

It was converted into a pucca one in stages. The ceiling of the temple was fixed just recently but still, it was a kutcha one. She wanted the floor to be plastered but the estimate was awfully expensive. Anmana Didi kept on thinking that the home of the Lord would become wet in the rainy season. But she also wondered where the money for the plastering would come from. Unlike most people who keep on saying "Oh, I do not have time", Anmana Didi was

faithful to her work. She was devoted to her daily work and God's work. But for her adopted son too, she often finds time.
In between, she goes to her village situated near Jhanjharpur bazaar. She maintains her house at Jhanjharpur responsibly. Then again, she comes to the village ... her father's village. People attempt to become *Sthitaprajna* by reading Gita. Look at Anmana Didi. She answers salutations by saying 'be happy.' No happiness or sorrow can be heard in her voice! No desire for any respect or help either.

She goes to the Dhanuktola and Dusadhtola quarters of the village. The people of these tolas respect her a lot. They do not have any desire to grab her house. Anmana Didi looks happy when she visits these *tolas*. She never asks for any help from the people of her tola. The people of her tola would help once and then tell their wives, who for years after that would remind Anmana Didi of the favour they had done.
The village people say, "Didi, it is a work meant for Lord Hanumanji, his temple is beside the road. We all go by the road and worship him by bowing our heads. We would work without accepting any wages."
"No dear, the pilgrimage and God's work should not be undertaken in this manner. I am not a queen and would never construct a temple or would never dig

a pond without paying wages to the labourers."
"But the casting and plaster work?"
2
Adjacent to this roadside temple, there is one acre of land in the name of Anmana Didi. After the cement plastering work is over, she will register this land in the name of God. Whatever harvest would be cropped, would be used for the maintenance of the temple.
However, a nephew from the neighbourhood has been after Anmana Didi for some time now.
"Didi, I am your nearest nephew. This land is adjacent to my house. Earlier the people gave land adjacent to the road to people of lower caste and widows. But now times have changed. Now the value of the house and the land beside the road has increased. You will die someday. Then this land would be the bone of contention amongst all the people in our quarter of the village."
People thought nothing of telling her to her face 'You will die someday!" But dare tell this to a woman whose husband is alive! But you can tell it to a widow; although she had adopted a boy and has a full-fledged family with a daughter-in-law and grandchildren! Anmana Didi replied, "This land has been earmarked for God. This is the only source of my livelihood. Whatever I save after my expenses is preserved for the casting and plastering of God's

house. The land and earnings of Jhanjharpur property are for my son and daughter-in-law. So how can I ..."

"Again, Didi! You did not understand! Till your death, keep all these properties; earn your livelihood. But after your death the people of our quarter of the village will quarrel, would you like it? And I am your closest nephew ..."

Anmana Didi's nephew works in some distant town. The people of the village normally desist from talking with her, afraid she might ask them for some help. But whenever this nephew comes to the village, he comes to meet her.

The ceiling of the temple leaks so much, and this year it leaked even more. The raw ceiling did not work even for two years. That would be replaced by casting, which is what Karim Miyan and Lakshmi Mistri have said; then only it will work. Let us see what happens...

The nephew comes to Anmana Didi's house even more often.

"All right Didi, give me half the land. Half an acre is enough for your nephew's dwelling, and the land for God would also be saved."

"But there will not be any entrance to the road from your house, then what would be the benefit?

"Leave it, Didi. Even now I have come through our quarter of the village. Nowadays it has become a fashion to construct houses near crossings and

beside the road. But on crossings or beside the road, only the house of God would be appropriate. Ten thousand rupees for half an acre, whenever you ask, I would pay; the cost of registry of land would be in addition to that."

"All right. Then I will think about it and then I will inform you. I would have to ask my son and daughter-in-law."

Anmana did begin to think in earnest. What was the way out? The walls of God's house have become black with the soot from the lamps. Even the statue of Lord Bajrangwali is Black with soot. She thought and thought till the morning birds began to sing.

"I will sell the land, what other option, no?”

The son and daughter-in-law said: “Dear Mother. That land is for God and that we know since the beginning. But look, he should not be doing any mischief."

"What mischief? He is paying price on the higher side. For God's temple, ten thousand rupees is not a small amount. I had only this much after a lifetime of saving. Will this half-constructed temple remain ever in this condition? I will talk to Lakshmi Mistri and Karim Miyan. Ten thousand rupees is sufficient not only for casting and plastering but also for constructing a boundary wall!"

An estimate was made. The work would start the following day after registering the property; and it

would be completed before *Bhadra*, the rainy season.

3

"This is the first time that I have got the opportunity of preparing papers for God!" Dasji's comment made Anamana Didi ecstatic.

"Look, the process of registering the property has been completed. Dasji is an expert in paperwork; it is a proven fact now, my God, it must have been perfect paperwork."

"People tell such lies like people's faith in God has diminished. Look at this Dasji. I had never met him before and do not have even a distant introduction. He has done two registrations, the first for the half-acre land in the name of my nephew and the second for the half-acre in the name of God! But he has prepared the papers by charging only one fee. He told me in clear terms 'Didi, I would not accept the fee for registering the papers in the name of God.’"

Anmana Didi is in a state of excitement. She removes everything from the temple building; the work will begin the next day. Laxmi Mistri has already brought all his tools for the work. Anmana Didi has already readied empty vessels too, which may be required. The pond is nearby, although full of lichen and moss; the village people have cleared some space at various places in the pond so that their buffaloes could drink the water.

But there is chaos in the morning. Karim Mian has

been stopped from doing the work. "Who has stopped him? Inform my nephew.", Anmana Didi said. But after registering the property, the nephew proceeded directly from Jhanjharpur to his place of work. The documents are also with Anmana Didi. The nephew's brother-in-law has objected to the work. He will not allow the boundary wall to be constructed. He is saying that the land beside the road is his brother-in-law's.

"But yesterday at the time of registration he was also present, then? Look, then this temple would also be in his name. He must be in some confusion." The nephew would return only at the beginning of the next month after he withdraws his salary. For a month, Anmana Didi travelled back and forth from her village to Jhanjharpur. Her son and daughter-in-law told her that it might have been a ploy by the nephew. "No, do not tell that. Dasji seemed so good-natured. Let us see what happens.", she replied.

4

"Didi, you are under some confusion, I think.", the nephew said.

"Then this temple is also yours, no?"

"No, Didi. This temple is for God and would remain his. And the land on the other side is also for Him"...

"Then this hut is also yours, no?"

"No, Didi. Till you live, please stay there. Who will

stop you?"

"Boy, I am obliged. And the outlet for the land is neither from our quarter of the village nor from the roadside."

"Didi, go through my land, who will stop you? And in the cultivated areas, everybody passes through the raised dividing line. Those farmers who do not have land beside the road go to their land or not? You are talking in a divisive tone of the new generation of people."

"But all these you did not tell me earlier!"

"Didi, I told you all this. But you are confused. If you do not remember, let me call Dasji he is a neutral person, an outsider." "

"All right. He is also part of the plot."

"He charged a fee for only one registration, and you are saying that he is part of the plot?"

The nephew's voice became harsher, he became restless and uttered loud words, and he departed quickly.

5

Today's morning at her father's village began the same way as the morning when her husband had died. Today the girls of the village did not come to her hut to pick lice from her head.

The night-long discussion of Anmana Didi with Lord Bajrangwali just concluded in the morning. The people were disturbed hearing this at night and tried to lull their children by patting them to sleep.

Somebody came in the morning and suggested arbitration with the help of the village panchayat. But Anmana Didi was angry with Lord Bajrangwali.

"I was planning to sell only the other half of the land, but he registered the land beside the temple. The land that is in the name of God now has no approach road from the temple. There is no path to go to that land from the temple. Look at this Bajrangwali. Mahavir! What power is inside him? After half-starving for forty years, I brought him from a hut to a pucca building. I just wanted the casting to be done, the boundary wall to be constructed, only that was my desire and that too for him. Ha!

6

The next morning people saw Anmana Didi standing at her nephew's door. The people thought that now more strife would ensue. But look, what is happening? Lakshmi's brother has brought a rickshaw. Anmana Didi is going to Jhanjharpur accompanied by her nephew! Who said this? She does not speak a word with anybody. All right, Lakshmi's brother has said all this. Yes, the one who had been sent to call the rickshaw must have passed on the information that the rickshaw is to go to Jhanjharpur.

Dasji had to prepare one more registration document. But looking at Anmana Didi, he started

to tremble. However, Anmana Didi's anger was so much, that she did not utter one word. She swallowed her anger. She registered the piece of land on the rear side also, in her nephew's name. After the registration, she returned from Jhanjharpur station to Jhanjharpur bazaar to her son and daughter-in-law.

Lakshmi's brother returned to the village. He took two passengers to Jhanjharpur station but came back with only one passenger. He brought a message also, a message from Lakshmi Mistri and Karim Miyan. Tomorrow morning, work would be started, again.

7

The boundary wall was constructed barring the temple of God and Anmana Didi's hut. Anmana Didi's nephew had said that nobody would touch her house till she was alive.

House or hut, the first year it got partly damaged. In the second rainy season, the bamboo support collapsed. But Anmana Didi did not come. The message was given to her by a person from the village. The casting work of the temple could not be completed. Anmana Didi went to Haridwar and returned after some days to Jhanjharpur.

People asked her: "What did you ask from the Ganges?"

"This blind faith should go out of my mind.", she said.

"And what did you sacrifice to the Ganges?"
"My anger, I gave it to the Ganges."
To all questions, Anmana Didi said only this: "What would you do? There is no power in Lord Bajrangwali. Let the hut fall. The hut with bamboo support, how long would it last anyway?"
8
Five years went by. The nephew had returned to the village. In the morning after he had relieved himself near the pond, he came near the handpump to clean his hand. He sat there with his water pot. Then suddenly he felt a massive pain in his chest, and nobody could save him. People began to talk, 'look at the curse of Anmana Didi; Didi had wept and wept that day. Before that day there was no power inside the statue of Bajrangwali. But a curse from a person who has been deeply hurt does work. That day the Bajrangwali awoke. Today he has shown his power.'
But Anmana Didi, when she heard the news, merely told the messenger that there was no life inside the stone statue of the Lord. Her nephew must have had a heart attack! Near her house too, a few days ago, a Marwari had a heart attack. But there were doctors there and this Marwari fellow's life was saved. In the village, people lose their lives since there is no treatment. That is why, in her old age, she decided to live with her son and daughter-in-

law in Jhanjharpur.

9

Cattle-grazer Brahmins mostly inhabit the village. The onslaught by the bhang-intoxicated buffaloes over the purchased pig from the Dom caste (considered untouchables in olden times) of village Samiya is worth watching.

The buffalo grazers sat over the buffalo in such control that was almost unimaginable. The participation of the Dom caste in festivals is apparent. From making big baskets to fans for the summer season; there is the participation of the Dom caste in all aspects of public life.

The Durga Pooja committee retains the head of the sacrificial animal.

The meat for all marriage feasts is obtained through the slaughterhouse of the Muslim tola. The Muslims retain the head and skin of the slaughtered he-goat. The buffalo-grazer Brahmins perform devotional songs on weekdays or on more auspicious occasions playing the drum that is made by using those skins. And a devotional song is going to be performed today before Lord Bajrangwali.

The big flag is flying, it has been there since the Ramnavmi festival. The bell along with some other gadgets is ringing. It is evening, and the buffalo grazers have arrived. For all festivals, be it the Sukharati festival or Ramnavmi, devotional songs are sung before Lord Hanuman. This is a matter of

faith for the people of the village and that is being performed today.
The villagers have plastered the Hanumanji temple. The casting of the ceiling has also been completed. People have started talking of Anmana Didi as an Anmana mystic (Baba). She died some years back. She did not return to the village. To reduce the effects of an evil eye over the dwelling land of her nephew, an astrologer suggested that a cow should always be there at the door. The passerby sees the cow grazing on the green grass and that takes out the effect of the evil eye.
Hanumanji's flag is flying high. It is evening. Brother Gonar is playing the drums ceaselessly.
Now Anmana mystic's words have spread near and far. True, before the statue of Hanumanji, there are two sets of devotees. One set of people believe in rationality: Anmana registered the remaining half an acre of the land to her nephew to instil fear and anxiety in his heart. He could not resist this attack from Anmana Didi. True, there cannot be any power in a stone statue.
But the second group has faith in Hanumanji. This Hanumanji has proved himself, he is great. Look, challenge an ant and she will bite you even though it may mean death for her. Anmana Didi challenged Lord Mahavir and how could he leave this challenge?

Brother Gonar is playing ceaselessly on the drum. He would please Hanumanji, no doubt about that. The bhang is working, his eyes are intoxicated, and his hands are flying over the drum. Seen from his eyes, the stone statue of Mahavir would look alive, as though a soul had indeed entered it.

Annexure Two

The Robber (Tashkar)

1

Inside the *Shaligram*-stone a hole exists, the black *shaligram* stone is found near the river Narmada. In Jamsam village much has changed, right from the *Dihbar*-worship place of the village deity to other things, but some of the other symbolic things are present. But any symbolic existence of my love story is not present anymore.

The plantation and the jungle have become sparse now. When I was a child, the mango orchard was full of underground passages and holes made by animals. It was full of distinct kinds of birds and big and small animals. From the month of *Jyestha* to *Agahan*, Malati and I used to gossip around the *khurchania*-creeper. During the *Phalgun-Chaitra* month, we used to have endless conversations near the *lavanglata* bush. *Malkoka, Kumud, Bhent, Kamalgatta*-root, the reddish-*Bisadh*: we were in search of these, wandering through the mud and muddy water. Barefooted, we hopped around thorny bushes and played a game of 'seven houses' in the mango orchard. We used to make our imaginary home with the *karbir*-bush. Malati is used to preserve the seeds of flowers.

Malati was the same age as me. My mother used to say that Malati was six months older than me, but

my father used to tell me that she was six months younger than me. Why he used to tell this, I came to understand much later.

During the entire mango season, Malati and I guarded the mango orchard. But at dusk, before night fell, my maternal uncle Bachhru and Malati's father Khagnathji would come to the orchard to guard it during the night. But here also there is no symbolic presence of our love tales. I mean, the love story of Keshav and Malati.

But there at the Pucca village deity spot, I try to look for the black *Shaligram*-stone, which has a hole inside. I had stealthily placed the stone here somewhere.

The villagers had spent a lot to make the dome for the village-deity place. Earlier there was nothing here. The stairways for the pond had been constructed by the King and this pucca temple; only these two things still existed. But the poor King could not worship here; out of dishonour, he did not come to this village.

2

I am Keshav, from village Mangarauni, of *Naraune Sulhane* root, gotra *Parashar*, son of Poet Madhurapati.

Malati was the daughter of Khagnath Jha of *Mandar Sihaul* root, and Kashyap gotra of village Jamsam.

Khagnathji and my maternal uncle Bachhru were close friends. My Bachhru mama hailed from

Jamsam village. He was well-to-do and we were poor. So, for the one-month summer vacation and the fifteen-day Durga pooja holidays till Chhath pooja, I used to stay in my maternal uncle's village. During the summer vacations, I would guard the mango orchard, watching the ripening of the early 'White' mango variety to late the 'Kalkatia' mango variety. During Durga pooja, we enjoyed the celebrations right from the first day till the immersion ceremony. Again, during the Deepawali festival, I lit the bamboo leaves and returned to my village at the time of the Chhath festival. In between throughout the year, I occasionally visited Jamsam village.

With Malati, I often quarrelled. Once, when I was in the fourth class, during the summer, I was visiting Uncle Bhachhru's mango orchard. I quarrelled and stopped talking to Malati since I was angry. However, I forgave her soon and resumed chatting with her; Malati always unusually softened me. She never remembered the topic of our quarrels; once I went up to her and said, "I am sorry for that ..."

"For what?" she said.

"For that over which we quarrelled."

I realised neither she nor I remembered what we quarrelled about, so after that, I never fought with her. She, however, often used to get angry with me, and then I would ask her why she was not talking to

me. And since she never remembered the matter for which she was angry and neither did I, then what is this quarrel all about?

Life went on in this way. After the summer vacation, I waited for the Durga pooja, and after the Durga pooja vacation, I looked forward to the summer vacation. From when this wait began, I do not remember.

3

Father lived by sharecropping in the village; that is, he worked in the fields of others for a share. After middle school, there was no school for higher education in the vicinity. All the Sanskrit schools had closed.

So, there was no school for me. Year-long, either it was work or vacation. My mother's parents were alive. My mother visited her father's place now and then. I also used to visit my maternal uncle's village often.

There were many problems in that village. I often heard the talk about the 'preservation of *Panji*' from my father. He also said that this was only possible if I could be married to Malati.

Malati was my friend. But we became distant after the 'preservation of *Panji*' topic began. The ease with which we met suddenly started to vanish. While seeing her I started imagining her as my wife, and I am sure she must have felt it too.

4

Soon after that, Bachhru's mama came to my village:

Madhurapati: "Bachhru, in your hands now lies all my respect. Khagnath's daughter is simply appropriate for Keshav. She is beautiful and good-natured, but our Keshav is also magnificent. Both are of the same age, but Malati is younger by some days. Oh! You do know that my father gave seven hundred rupees to the bride's father and then my marriage was solemnised, and my father had *Panji*. But we do not have land now. Yesterday the genealogist came on a mare; the mare was intoxicated after drinking bubble-bubble. He told me at once that only Khagnath's daughter is available, while he prepared the list of the probable. And if that does not happen, I would be debarred from the east-coast Shrotriya's group."

Bachhru: "I am going to ask Khagnath. He is my friend, but what is inside his mind, that only he can tell."

I did not know why my heart was filled with love. I had accompanied Bachhru's mama to his village.

5

Malati: "Keshav, if you are married to somebody else then how can we meet?"

Keshav: "If you were married to somebody else, then how you would ask these meaningless

questions?"
Malati: "But you understand one thing? Yesterday your maternal uncle was talking to my father regarding our marriage!"
Keshav: "Then?"
Malati: "No, all was well but then a messenger from the King of Darbhanga came to say that he had a message to convey from the King".
Keshav: "What was the message from the King?"
Malati: "I do not know. But the messenger told my father not to finalise my marriage for some time."
Keshav: "You are so beautiful. The King must have seen some boy for you."
Malati: "I do not know..."

6

The caravan of the king's minister stood in front of Khagnathji's house! What changes happened in these two days? The messenger had passed on some messages. So Khagnathji is in such a hurry now, for the marriage of his daughter! See the swiftness. People reached there in large numbers, and all were busy with the welcome ceremony. I too was observing everything. By evening my father had also come. There went the minister's caravan and my father's hand touched his forehead. And he then relapsed into silence. Khagnathji was also silent.

The King had sent a proposal for his marriage to Malati! King Bireshwar Singh. What a shame! He

must have been over forty years of age and this proposal of marriage with a thirteen or fourteen-year-old girl? What was the status of Khagnathji, how could he oppose the proposal?

My father was anxious; the *Panji* would not be preserved.

On that day, in the evening, I met Malati near the corner of her house. Her big eyes, like the *Karjani*, were swollen; it looked like she had wept without consolation, for hours. What I said to her, I do not remember. Yes, but in the end, I told her that everything would be all right.

7

In Jamsam village, the marriage proposal was solemnised between King Bireshwar Singh and Malati.

Also, in Jamsam village, a pond was dug. Beside the pond, a new temple was constructed; how could the King worship in a temple constructed by others?

But I, Keshav, was the son of Poet Madhurapati!

The marriage date came closer. There were no other auspicious dates during that season. That evening I told my plans to Malati.

In a wooden cart, the front part as well as the back remains unstable. The pressure on the front must be more because otherwise, the back would be unstable, and the cart would tumble. But I balanced the back of the cart, and I waited for Malati near the

bamboo trees.

She came and sat on the cart. Whoever saw me on the road did not talk to me for fear that the cart would tumble. She saw a colourful *Patrangi* bird and nearly exclaimed aloud; I put my fingers on her lips.

I brought Malati to my village. The wedding preparations had started; my *dhoti* was being coloured for the occasion. Somebody came from Malati's village to enquire about her; I captured that person and hold him back. When the question arose in my village, "Who would perform the ceremony of kanyadaan from the bride's side", I brought out that person. I said, "He is from the bride's village, so he will perform kanyadaan."

I put down the leather *Salamshahi* shoe, wore a *dhoti* and performed the marriage rites. The vermillion ceremony, where the sacred vermillion is placed on Malati's head was fated to be performed only by my hand.

8

Now, what would King Bireshwar Singh do?

He called the genealogist and ordered him to place the derogatory title of "Tashkar" - robber - before my name in the *Panji*. But Madhurapati was full of pride for his son. A tiger's son is again a tiger! *Panji* and water both go downwards, as courage flows down from father to son. But after *Tashkar* Keshav marries Khagnath Jha of Srikant Jha *Panji*'s daughter, Madhurapati's shrotriya category would

remain in existence.

And after one hundred years, a play is going to be performed in this village: "Sultana- the Robber!”

And I, Tashkar Keshav, from root *Mangrauni Naraune Sulhani* of *Parashar* gotra, son of Poet Madhurapati, am looking for symbols of my love story in this village Jamsam. But only that pond built by King Bireshwar Singh and the dilapidated temple could be seen. Poor King, he did not come again to this village out of shame.

This pond and the dilapidated temple are the remains of our love.

Annexure Three

The Science of Words (ShabdaShastram)

The Sun happens to be in the fifth sign of the zodiac, normally between *the sixteenth of August* to *the sixteenth of September*. If you want to dry something then it is the best time to do so, since during this period the most intense light and heat of the Sun falls on earth.
During this fifth sign of the zodiac, the palm leaves remain under the Sun, a part of Milu's father's annual preservation plan, to instil life in these palm leaves. Ananda used to help in preserving these palm leaves. She would carefully place the palm leaves where they would get the maximum heat, Milu remembered vividly. Ananda's life was mostly spent with Milu. But before the onset of this year's fifth sign of Leo of the sun-zodiac, Ananda had departed ... and now when she is not present, how will the preservation of life be possible, the life of Milu's and these palm-leaf inscriptions...
Fallacy, the fallacy of words, we ascribe our emotions to words, and after that confusion begins.

In the courtyard of Lukesari, there is a tree of sandalwood.
Beneath that the cuckoos clamour
I will cut the sandalwood tree and encircle the

courtyard.
Cuckoo, your clamouring will end.
The cuckoo of the jungle began crying.
The cuckoo's clamour stopped.
Oh! cuckoos, cuckoos of youthfulness, do not cry.
Clamour cuckoo, clamour
Whichever jungle you would go to.
Your marks would remain there.
Tears do not come out of the eyes.
I will wrap both your wings with gold, o cuckoo.
I will wrap both of your lips with silver.
O my cuckoo dear, whichever jungle you would go
The maks of 'garland of blood' would remain.

Some voice was coming from the village quarters where the tanners lived ... it was Ananda's voice.
But Ananda was dead, only a few hours earlier! Bachlu had seen her dead body. After informing Milu, he returned to the village quarters. Ananda had died when she was quite old. But the voice that was heard was of a young Ananda...
It may be a fallacy, a fallacy of words. Srikar Mimamsak, Milu's father, often said many things about the 'science of words.' We ascribe meaning to the words and then the confusion begins...

I
The Science of Words

There was a tumult.
The turmoil began. In the river Balaan, a corpse was found floating. Besides the washerman's quay, the corpse had got stuck on the edge.
From where it had come nobody knew. It was a dead body of an old woman. But the washerwoman recognised it. She informed Bachlu, who in turn gave the news to the dead woman's family. Only an old man lived in that house ... the house of Milu. Milu's village people brought the dead body to the village. Milu performed the last rites.
In the village, this incident became a hot topic of discussion. The old Bachlu knew something more. He knew who the dead woman was. The new generation did not know all these things...
The dead body of Ananda was consigned to the flames...
Ananda was kind, she understood things quickly. Her daughters were married into well-to-do families. Her son was educated. Milu, Ananda's husband, and son of Srikar Mimamsak were also highly educated. Never had they asked anything from anybody, even in times of need.
Bachlu was also old... In this village, only Milu was older than him. The people regarded these two as "old men".
Old man Bachlu knew many things...
....

Discussions between Milu and Srikar were common. Sometimes I understood and sometimes I did not...

"Milu, in the book Bhamati, Vachaspati says that the basis of ignorance of living becomes the subject. You will accept which method for self-introspection? How can the untruth be the cause of something? How can the fact of the existence of something prove something as true; and how it can prove its existence in three ages? That which is neither true nor false; and which is also not both, only that is unspeakable. Without any subject and the knower of that subject, how the concept of zero can be explained? Milu, Kumaril says that the Atman (soul) is living inertia. During the awakened stage, it is knowledgeable and during sleep, it is without knowledge. Milu, Vachaspati says in Bhamati that a person expert in a science that is without self-introspection behaves with society in the same way as an animal behaves with it. He flees on seeing a person coming holding a stick; and if he sees someone coming with a basket of food, then he goes near to him. It means that he fears fear."

***

It was the season of mango fruits.

Monkeys and *Nilgais* leapt from tree to tree, and the Bison trampled vegetables growing in the fields behind the houses in the village.

"Everything has been destroyed, Bachlu. I will go to the orchard in the morning. The *Nilgai* has already bitten a lot of fruits and crops, now these monkeys are after the mango fruits."

I did remember that during the mango season Monkeys and Nilagais had a great feast every year. It was the mango season. So, Milu would have to begin guarding the mango orchard. The flowers had just begun turning into fruits. Milu had to construct a loft; I also helped him. We were just returning after cutting the bamboo. It was early in the morning, and the red in the sky had a yellowish hue. Near the small pond, I saw Bachlu...

-

I began to come forward through the pathway in the field. Then I saw some blood... I became nervous after seeing the blood.

But I relaxed soon. I then saw the sharp leaves of bamboo had bruised the girl's hand.

The girl had tears in her eyes. Milu cleaned the blood and put some damp soil on her bruises.

"What are you doing?"

"The flow of blood will stop. It will stop bleeding now."

The girl had run through the field. -"What is your name?"

"Ananda".

"From which village have you come?"

"From this village."
"From this village?", both of us exclaimed together. Yes, Ananda was her name. And it was their first meeting, Milu, and Ananda.
....
The loft in the mango orchard was constructed. But Ananda was not seen after that.
Milu often asked about her.

-To which quarter of the village does she belong? She is neither from the quarter of the Mishras nor from the quarters of the Westerners or the Thakurs, he kept thinking.
-If she had been from the quarter of scavengers, then I would have known her.
-Then how she is from our village, and if she is from our village then why have we not met her till now?

But in between these events, a coincidence occurred. In Milu's quarter, an investiture ceremony of Phude's son was held. On that auspicious day, I had gone outside the village to the tanner's quarters to cut bamboo. I also had to call the men who would play the pipes.
"Hirua brother, O Hirua brother".
"He is coming".
A woman's voice was heard. The voice seemed familiar to me.

"Who are you?"
"I am Hirua's daughter. What do you want?"
"Your father did not come for the bamboo cutting ceremony; the voice of his pipe is missing there. I have come here to call him."
"He is preparing for that occasion".
"What is your name?"
At that very moment, a girl came outside, pushing aside the creepers which were hanging from their house enclosure made of bamboo.
"I am Ananda. I recognised you. What is your name?"
I was feeling cold. But I had to answer.
"Bachlu."
"And your friends' name?"
"Milu, son of Pandit Srikara."
I told Milu's father's name to Ananda, although she did not ask for it. Not knowing why...I told her.
At that moment Hirua came out with his pipe. I accompanied him to Milu's quarter of the village. On the way, I asked Hirua- "Ananda is your daughter but I have never seen her."
"She has lived, most of the time, at her maternal uncle's place. But now she has come of age. So, I brought her to the village."
"When will she go to her maternal uncle's place?"
"No! Now she is of marriageable age. She will remain with us."
Milu, my friend, had been asking a lot about her. I

kept thinking about how he would react after hearing about the news of marriage. I wished that Ananda would go back to her maternal uncle's village and then I would be free from Milu's repeated questioning.

But now since Ananda would remain in the same village as Pandit Srikar's son Milu, what would he do?

Oh ... I, myself, am thinking out of context. Milu had naturally asked about Ananda. That does not mean that ...but does it mean..., then?

The son of a Brahmin and the daughter of a Tanner...

Will Pandit Srikar approve of this relationship? Will the village people approve of this relationship?

Oh...I am again thinking out of context. I could hear the pipe blowing. People moved forward towards the bamboo plantation, and through the field, Milu and I accompanied them. On the way, I tried to locate that place. The place where Milu and Ananda first met ...we could hear a faint voice ...a beautiful musical sound... The boy, whose investiture ceremony was going on, had marked the bamboo. The bamboo now had to be cut. Construction of the sacred loft in the courtyard had to be completed today as it was an auspicious day. After much labour and sweat, we finally completed the work and only then my mind was at peace. After that Milu

and I started walking through the field.
But Milu started asking me questions about Ananda again. He was my Lord Rama, and I was his follower, Hanuman.
Sitting on the loft in the orchard one day, I said to Milu:
"Milu. Please forget her. Why are you bent upon giving her a bad name? Ananda is Hirua's daughter. Although she asked only your name, I told her both your and your father's name".
"She asked for my father's name?"
"No, but..."
"Then why did you tell her my father's name?"
"One day she would come to know ..."
"That day I would have faced ... now she will ignore me ... now I have to put in some extra effort."
"What effort? You are Brahmin Srikar's son, and she is the daughter of Hirua, the tanner. Why are you bent upon giving her a bad name?"
"I will marry her, why I would give her a bad name?"
"Who are you deceiving?"
"I am deceiving nobody, dear friend."
Milu took decisions impulsively. He was Pandit Srikar's son. Srikar was an exponent of the Mimamsa school of Indian Philosophy. I had seen the palm-leaf inscriptions lying everywhere in his house; so, I did not believe my friend.
"I have never seen her in the village."
"You never stay in the village for long. You returned

only last year from the school of your teacher."
"But you had also not seen her."
"She has been living in her maternal uncle's village."
"Will she go to her maternal uncle's village again?"
"No, I had enquired again about that. She will now remain in the village."
***
Last year, Milu's mother died.
Srikar Mimamsak became almost crazy. The village people were worried: How would there be the preservation of palm leaves in this year's Leo zodiac of the sun? Srikar had been grappling with this anxiety and so he became almost crazy...it was being discussed by the people of his quarter of the village.
....
Hirr...hirr...hirr...
From my quarter of the village, Domasi, Milu and I were shouting hirr...hirr and following the pigs. We reached the tanner's quarters in the village. Ananda, however, met us midway. Along with the pigs, I moved forward. After a while, I turned my head around to overhear the talk between Ananda and Milu.
Hirr...hirr...
This time Ananda shouted "hirr" and I smiled and moved further along with the pigs.
This went on for quite some time. Hirua was

agitated and came to me several times. Hiru's wife began praying for her daughter.

How distant is the temple of the Goddess?
How distant is the temple of Lukesari?
Many miles I went for an appeal.
Goddess, look unto me.
Many miles I went for an appeal.
Goddess, look unto me.
Four miles away from the temple of the Goddess.
Eight miles is the temple of Lukesari.
Ten miles I went for an appeal.
Goddess, look unto me.
Ten miles I went for an appeal.
Goddess, look unto me.
Which flower is for the temple of the Goddess?
Which flower is for the temple of Goddess Bandi?
Which flower for my chosen appeal?
Goddess, look unto me.
Which flower for my chosen appeal?
Goddess, look unto me.
This flower is for the temple of the Goddess.
That jasmine flower for the temple of Lukesari
The Marigold flower I chose for appeal.
Goddess, look unto me.
The Marigold flower I chose for appeal.
Goddess, look unto me.

....

Hirua came to Domasi, the village quarter of the scavengers.

"What will happen? How will it happen?"
"All false..."
"I promised him that I would accompany him to Srikar Pandit."
And I accompanied him one day to Srikar Mimamsak. "Srikar's wife died soon after the Leo zodiac of the Sun. After that Mimamsak became crazy ... people say, people who were from his quarter of the village. The people of the village and the learned people of the area respected him. I am telling you what I have seen with my eyes.", I said to him on the way.
Talking thus, we reached pander Srikar's house.
"Come Bachlu. Hirua, come and sit down.", saying that Srikar relapsed into silence. After the death of his wife, he had become like this. He seemed normal but suddenly would become lost in silence.
"Uncle, the courtyard of your house is empty. How long will you let it remain so? Why don't you get your son Milu married?"
“Milu has already made his decision about his marriage."
"When and where?", I became agitated and asked. Hirua seemed to look towards me with relieved eyes.
"He has decided to marry Ananda. Her father has come with you."
Oh... and Srikar Pandit was that type!

And Milu was of that type too! He has already hypnotised his father. But a person from Srikar's quarter of the village overheard this talk.

We all were seated when that person came to Srikar's house, accompanied by some other people. An argument ensued between Srikar Pandit and these people. The opposite argument, word for word, ensued.

"Srikar, what type of demeanour is this?"

"Which type of demeanour?"

"You do not have any sense in distinguishing high and low Mimamsak?"

"Dear learned folks! What is this high and low differentiation?"

“That means that high and low are only meanings of words. And the analysis that we have done after making it a sentence is selfish?"

"If you do not believe then surrender the selfish content from the sentence. All fallacy would be falsified."

"Does this mean you are hell-bent on carrying out the marriage between Milu and Ananda?"

"Dear Learned Folks! You confuse snake for rope because both have a separate existence. If you squeeze your eyes shut, then you would see two moons; then you place moons in two real places in the sky. The reason for fallacy is not the subject but the attachment, although both purpose and result are true. And here also the knowledge of all

subjects cannot give knowledge of the self. One's nature is described by knowledge of self through the concept of self. Self is the subject and the object both, of knowledge. The knowledge of self is both subject and object. The meaning of substance is obtained through attachment. The meaning of a word is near its inference after we hear the word.”

“You are creating a fallacy of words. We all see that you are determined to get them married.”

"When desire does not get fulfilled then it is envy.", Pandit Srikar commented.

"Do you think that all this that we are saying is out of envy? Don't you give any value to caste?"

"See, Ananda is full of good qualities. My caste and hers are the same, and that is the truth and known to all. She will be able to preserve the legacy that I believe. And that is my decision."

"And that is my decision,” these words did not enter my and Hirua's ears simultaneously. I had known Srikar and Milu for a long time. But this type of unexpected decision to which I was accustomed Hirua was not. Hirua realised what these words meant after some time. He was amazed when he turned and looked towards me.

Then Srikar Mimamsak pointed a finger towards one person, an astrologer.

"Jyotishiji, you select one auspicious day. In this season this holy marriage should be held. The Leo

zodiac of the sun is arriving. Before that. Does anyone of you have any objection?"
All stood on their feet with bowed heads. Who would dare to oppose Srikar Mimamsak?
"All of us came here to discuss. But if you have already taken a decision then there remains nothing to oppose."
Mimamsak raised his hand, and all became silent.
I and Hirua moved slowly away from there.
Hirua took such a deep breath that I could feel it.
....
It was not that any other obstruction did not come. But that crazy Srikar Mimamsak was a scholar of repute. Ananda became his daughter-in-law. She was accepted not only in Milu's quarter of the village but also among all the scholars in the vicinity.
....
In Ananda's father's house, the marriage ceremony was organised. I had heard the song, full of life, I still remember:
The black bee that slept over the hill
Gardener-daughter sleeping in the garden.
Get up gardener-daughter, keep the garland.
The black bee that slept over the hill
Gardener-daughter slept in the garden.
Get up gardener-daughter, keep the garland.
With what flower I would cover Goddess Lukesari
With what I would make her clothes

With what flower I will knot to make it an ornament
Get up the gardener-daughter and place the garland.
With Arabian jasmine flowers, I will cover Bandi.
With Spanish jasmine, I will clothe her.
China rose would be the ornament of Lukesari.
Get up gardener-daughter, thread the garland.
Get up gardener-daughter, thread the garland.
....

Srikar Mimamsak became more composed after assigning the task of preserving the palm leaf inscriptions to Ananda. After his wife's death, the poor man was apprehensive regarding that important work of his.

Ananda's role in preserving these palm leaves seemed like a divine interference. In a sudden turn of events, Milu told me how he had convinced Srikar Pandit about this marriage. The daughter of a Brahmin would be busy cleaning utensils and Pooja materials; she would be busy making an earthen image of Lord Shiva, and by then the palm leaves would get damaged.

He could not allow these palm leaves to be destroyed; Ananda had to get married to his son and come to his home, Srikar Mimamsak had decided.

Milu was grateful for his decision.

Srikar had aged. Srikar and Ananda were still very

much active in holding their philosophical discussions.

Ananda sang:

When twelve years passed, and the thirteenth arrived.
When twelve years passed the thirteenth arrived
Folks my mother-in-law calls me tigress.
She would banish the tigress from her house.
Folks my mother-in-law calls me tigress.
She would banish the tigress from her house.
Outside your courtyard of yours is standing the moneylender
Folks, give me Madar and Thornapple, I will grind and will drink it.
Folks, give me Madar and Thornapple, I will grind and will drink it.
The beloved came from outside and sat on the bedstead.
The beloved came from outside and sat on the bedstead.
Folks, tell the thoughts of your heart; after that, I will drink poison.
Folks, tell the thoughts of your heart; after that, I will drink poison.
When twelve years passed, and the thirteenth arrived.
Folks, my mother-in-law calls me tigress.
I will banish the tigress from home.
My mother-in-law beats me, my sister-in-law beats me.
My mother-in-law beats me, my sister-in-law beats me.
Folks, these will go, and all the wealth would be mine

Folks, these will go, and all the wealth would be mine
Keep silence; keep silence proud women you are great, proud women.
Keep silence; keep silence proud women you are great, proud women.
Proud women, I will perform holy-basil-plant oblation and will squander all my wealth.
Folks: I will perform pond oblation and will squander all my wealth.

Srikar Mimamsak would jokingly ask- "Ananda, you do not have a mother-in-law, then can you say that she is calling you a tigress?

"Therefore, I am singing, everything I have, but ..."

While speaking Ananda's eyes were full of tears. I still remember this.

"I caused you pain by telling this."

"What pain; I do not have a mother-in-law, but I do have a father-in-law."

Seeing Srikar happy, Milu always felt satisfaction.

....

Even after Srikar Mimamsak's death, Ananda continued to instil life in these palm leaves.

At the proper time, Milu had two daughters, Vallabha, and Medha.

I had seen the joy on Ananda's face. She had gone to her mother's place, where she gave birth to the twins.

You Red Fairy. O Pink fairy

You Red Fairy. O Pink fairy
O Over the sky would dance the Indra Fairy
O. On the rose would dance the Indra Fairy
At the proper time, he had a son. When his son Megha grew up, Milu sent him to Benaras to study. The days passed, his daughters grew up, and both Medha and Vallabha were married. Milu knew inner satisfaction and peace.
His son's marriage was also performed in the meantime. Megha began teaching in Benaras. Megha, Medha and Vallabha all three came to the village at least once a year.
People forgot many things about them.

2
The Stage of Bhamati

Ananda was busy preserving the palm leaves of Milu's father; even in the intense heat, Milu still remembers.
Ananda's whole life was spent with Milu and when she was not present then how could Milu survive?...
Milu did not listen to the holy Garur Purana. Milu liked to hear Mandan's Brahmsidhi and Vachaspati's Bhamati when he felt in the mood to listen to something. If his daughters insisted, then he would hear Kumaril's philosophy about self.
Srikar often spoke many things about the science of words and the philosophical writing of Bhamati. We

ascribe too much meaning to words and then begin the confusion.

"Teacher; after my wife's death, I am in distress. What is this life? Where will Ananda be?"

"Milu; be composed. This lesson of Brahmasidhi will remove all your illusion. In Brahmsidhi there are four divisions - Brahma, Logic, Command and Accomplishment. In the Brahma division, the discussion is on forms of Brahma, in the Logic division it is on proof, in the Command division it is on the liberation of living beings and in the Accomplishment part, there is a discussion on the proof of Upanishadic thoughts. Milu, there is no subject apart from liberating knowledge. Liberation is knowledge itself. Mandan gives value to the mean knowledge of Man's intellect. He values work. But these alone are not enough for liberation. The sound word was given meaning through the explosion that Mandan saw. So, he is different from Shankar in a way that he identifies this explosion and gives identity to it, but Shankar does not believe in any identity less than that of Brahma. So, Mandan is a purer non-dualist as compared to Shankar. Milu, Mandan does not believe in abled and not-abled as mutually opposed. This sometimes means action-based difference, but that difference will not become an original element. So that Brahma would remain in all differences and still would do every

work. Look, the thought at the Bhamati stage of Vachaspati and the philosophy of Mandan, are in coherence. On Brahmsidhi of Mandan, Mishra Vachaspati wrote an elucidation called Epistemology Critique. Although that work is now not available".

"Then how did epistemology critique come forward?"

"In Bhamati of Vachaspati, there is a discussion about it."

“But before knowing the thoughts of Mandan I feel that when he lost a discussion with Shankaracharya then how one would benefit from his defeated theories and how one would get peace?”

“See, Mandan was defeated; the evidence of this is not available in the writings of Mandan. Mandan was a supporter of the theory of explosion, but Shankaracharya denied it. Mandan was a supporter of the opposite fame of Kumaril Bhatt; but Shankaracharya's pupil Sureshvaracharya, whom people often identify with Mandan Mishra, opposes the opposite fame theory.”

“That is right. If Mandan had lost, he would have followed Shankaracharya.”

“Now tell me, the Sureshvaracharya, who was appointed as head of Sringeri Math by Shankaracharya, says that ignorance is not of two types, but Mandan mentions two types of ignorance in Brahmsidhi as non-acceptance and

wrong acceptance. Mandan tells living one is an abode of ignorance, but Sureshvaracharya disagrees with it. Mandan opposes Shankaracharya but Sureshvaracharya follows him.”

....

Monkeys and Nilgais are tearing down the fruit trees and the male buffaloes are trampling the cultivated land behind the dwelling houses. Now for my sake, the village people would not stop rearing buffaloes.

"Four monkeys are in the orchard, and they are damaging the mangoes. I had gone there. In the evening, all the monkeys were perched on top of the trees. Till evening we, father and son duo, took care of the orchard. Now the monkeys have fled when we threw wooden missiles, but then they went towards your orchard."

"All has been damaged. At night I am not able to see. In the morning I will go to the orchard. The Nilgais have also been damaged a lot. And now these monkeys are after mangoes. Let them damage when..."

"The Nilgais were completely gone from our area for some time. How have they resurfaced again? They must have crossed the river from the next village during the night..."

"I don't think that is true. These Nilgais have come from the Nepal side during the floods. Let them

come when..."

"I told you about the monkeys."

"That would be done."

"All right, brother: then I am going," I remember the year when Ananda and Milu had met for the first time when during the month of mangoes, the Monkeys and Nilgais had suddenly disappeared. Now when Ananda has departed, these Monkeys and Nilgais have resurfaced again from nowhere. Not even fifteen days have passed since Ananda's death...

....

Bachlu left the place and on Milu's forehead thick lines of anxiety began moving, one towards the other like waves do, interfering mutually, the old waves turning into new waves and moving forward. He calls his daughters, his voice reaching across the courtyard.

"Daughters! Jayakar and Vishwanath had gone to the orchard today; have both returned or not? I heard that the monkeys are up to mischief there. From tomorrow Jayakar and Vishwanath will not go to the orchard, tell them. Today monkeys came to the orchard; you did not tell me this. What should I do after hearing this when ..."

"I did tell you, father, but these days you remain in your thoughts. Then I got tired after repeating it, so I stopped."

Yes, Milu nowadays is lost in his world. The

mangoes had begun ripening soon after Ananda's death... After so many years these Monkeys and Nilgais have again resurfaced to remind us of something!

....

Vallabha, the mother of Jayakar, and Medha, the mother of Vishwanath, both sisters have come to their mother's house after a long time. They met each other after so many days. The sons-in-law of Ananda have also come: Visho, the husband of Vallabha; and Kanh, the husband of Medha. Megha has also come with his wife and children.

Milu is calling for his wife ... Ananda ... Ananda. Then he remembers that she is gone now. Then he begins to call ... where is Vallabha ... where are you, Medha? Where are you, Jayakar, and Vishwanath?

Vallabha and Medha both come, and Milu begins singing. Ananda often sings the song: the songs that Ananda sang for Vallabha and Medha.

Red fairy. O. The Pink fairy

Red fairy. O. The Pink fairy

O. Over the sky would dance the Indra fairy.

The Goddess of the garland of red blood is standing at the door, the devotee has become poor.

O after she became poor, she is standing near the door of the blood-garland goddess

Mother, we would have to give money to the poor.

Mother, we would have given money to the poor.

Mother, we had given money to the poor.
Red fairy O pink fairy
Mother, O after she became blind, she is standing near the door of the blood-garland goddess.
Mother O, give an eye to the blind immediately.
Mother O, give an eye to the blind immediately.

The father and both daughters began crying.

....

“Ananda's death has been a disaster for you. Even though you are from the Brahmin caste and Ananda is from the tanner caste, the love between you two is incomparable. Do not be unhappy over her death. Brahma is without sorrow. The fanciful face of Brahma is pure joy. Thereafter your unhappiness over Ananda is inappropriate. Brahma is the one who oversees. The visible ones are changeable and do not have any relation with the overseer. This world is not simply a fallacy, but it does have an existence. But this practical existence is not true. Milu, there is a difference between consciousness and unconsciousness; but that is not true. Living beings are of many types and ignorance is also of many kinds. Ignorance is one vice but the reference to it cannot be Brahma, it cannot be a complete soul. Its reference can only be an incomplete soul. Ignorance then is not true, but it is not a major untruth either. Milu; please remove this ignorance; that is called liberation, that liberation

which Ananda has achieved.”

And on Milu's face, complete peace could be seen.
....
Milu remembers the discussion he had once with Ananda, a long, long time ago…
"Ananda, when I am talking to you, again and again, I am gripped with fear. My father's weakness is his possessiveness for palm leaf inscriptions. So please remember all this: when my father asks you how these palm leaves should be preserved, then your reply should be: by protecting the books from water, oil, and loose binding, by drying these under the shadow. These books contain five hundred to six hundred leaves. I will bring some of those books for you to see. One leaf is a hand long and around four fingers broad. These are covered with wooden frames on top and bottom. On the left side, there remains a hole through which a rope passes thereby binding the leaves together."
"Your father would agree?"
“He will have to agree. He does not have the means to bring a Brahmin bride. I once gave a farmer two rupees in advance for buying some land. But my father brought the advance back. He is saving money. He will have to spend seven hundred rupees to have his son married to a good Brahmin family so that his superior genealogy is preserved.

And that Brahmin bride would come and preserve his palm leaf inscriptions?"
After the death of Milu's mother, Srikar became almost crazy; the people of his quarter of the village often said.
The village plague destroyed two-quarters of the village; those of the Mishras and the Westerners almost got annihilated. How many people in the surrounding areas died, nobody could count.
Milu got an opportunity so that his father could meet Ananda. Srikar saw in Ananda much more besides the quality of palm leaf preservation techniques.
Milu was victorious. Milu, of the Nyaya School of Philosophy, had won over Srikar of the Mimamsa School of Philosophy!
And the marriage of Ananda and Milu was thus solemnised.
***
He remembers his love talks with Ananda. Milu, it seems, is going to meet her. Ananda has died. She slipped into the Balaan River. The marks of her feet slipping into the river are quite visible.
Milu sees that mark and his heart fills with joy, he slips into the wave of emotion...
Ananda and Milu would meet very often, and take walks in the fields, the orchards, and the grazing grounds, beside the river. Milu did not jump into the river. This slope had become slippery, thanks to the

young boys. Milu has a lot of memories of this place, he had often sat over here and then rushed forward at great speed into the river, cutting the waves in the forward direction.
"Hey, come and do this.", he said.
"That is not a big deal."
"Perform first, then only I would believe."
Ananda tried carefully but...
He could not stop her, especially beside the river.
***
She must have come here ...and then she slipped ... and drowned.
She might have come to remember something.
Yes. Ananda has arrived. Bachlu, listen, listen to this song.
Behind the house is the tree of china-rose flower
It is laden with fruits and flowers.
A parrot came from the northern state.
The parrot sat on the china-rose tree.
The parrot eats neither fruit nor flower.
It is destroying branches and leaves.
The parrot eats neither flowers nor seeds.
It has destroyed branches and leaves.
Beside the house, there lives a jackal.
O Jackal, please capture this parrot sitting over the tree
Once tried.
Twice tried.
A third time the parrot flies

Neither this parrot is a mystic
Nor is the partridge.
It is like a conveyance for hen-sparrow.
“Brother; are you not able to hear this song?”
“Brother, I am hearing and seeing. Ananda, my sister-in-law, is singing. I also heard this song the day she died; it was she, singing-
In the courtyard of Goddess Lukesari, there is a tree of sandalwood.
Beneath that the cuckoos clamour.”

It was not the fallacy of words.

The next day after the ritual of fish and meat and after the Pooja of Lord Satyanarayan, Ananda neither cut the sandalwood tree nor encircled her courtyard.
The next day beneath that sandalwood tree the villagers saw two dead bodies in the tanner quarter of the village. The voice of Ananda echoed in the sky; all the village folks heard this:
Whichever jungle you would go to dear lovable cuckoo.
A mark of the garland of blood would be left.

It was not the fallacy of words.

Annexure Four

The Cattle Grazer Brahmin Village (Mahisbar Brahmanak Gaam)

One thousand heads, thousand mouths, thousand types of gossip, all true and un...

The Shudras have come out of the feet and so has the earth.

Garh Narikel, a village. Cattle-grazer Brahmins predominantly inhabit it.

Ponds and trees are all around this village. In this village one...two...three and one more, four ponds exist.
Exactly it is not so. There are three more ponds in this village. One is in the northern direction of the north pond, popularly known as the gigantic pond. People say that some monster dug this pond in just one night. But even after digging it for the whole night, the monster could not install the central sacred wooden pole in the middle of the pond. As the monster was in a hurry so he left the shoe of his one leg there beside the mound and left the place. For many years that huge shoe remained there but again after many years, during the flood, that too

got lost. So, the only evidence that was there vanished. This pond is far away from the village, so no relation between this village could be established with the Chhatha festival. Yes, but this pond is mentioned during the ceremony of the sacred thread. Distinct types of fish reside in this pond. There is never a dearth of fish here. No need has ever been felt for putting seeds of fish (small fishes) into this pond. There is an annual fish-catching festival and barring the southern quarter of the village, the whole village gets its daily share of fish for at least one month.

In the southern direction of the south pond, there is a pond called the Buchiya (in the name of a person) pond. It is also far from the village, but there is a sacred wooden pole installed in the centre of this pond. When this central sacred wooden pole was being installed a big ceremony was thrown by the great-great-grandfather of Zamindar, Piyar Bachcha (yellow boy). He had organized a grand great feast. This pond is far far away from the village and in all directions of this pond, there are fields only. People rarely come here to take a bath. Here too there is an annual fish-catching ceremony, but that is only for this southern quarter of the village. There are many things attached to this pond. During Durga Pooja goddess Durga proceeds to her husband's place, on the last day of the festivities. On that day, the idol of the goddess

Durga is immersed in this pond. Not the men, but yes, the women weep bitterly at the time of immersion of Durga. The idol of Durgaji is not made in this village, no question of it being constructed in the southern quarter of the village. But it is immersed in this pond. This idol of Durga is made and worshipped in the neighbouring Garh Tola (small village). The Garh Narikel people are mischievous ones. Till the sixth day of the Durga festival, the idol of Durgaji remains covered. Only the artist can see her because if he does not then how the idol is constructed? Any other people, however, would become blind if they see the Durga before being unveiled. Yes, but after the ceremony of Belnoti- when the eye of Durga is placed out of an invited wood-apple fruit, the idol of Durga is unveiled and then only the people can see it. And from that day the actual festival begins. If the idol of Durga is made in this village many people would become blind before the sixth day of the festival. The neighbouring village is not a less mischievous one, it is only the degree. In the name of the festival, all of them become disciplined. In the name of their village, the suffix is added, tola (quarter of a village) suffix. But that does not make it a quarter of a village; it is a full-fledged village. Garh Tola village is also inhabited by the cattle grazing Brahmins. In mischievousness, there is always competition

between these two villages. If you pass through the Garh Tola village, the lads sitting in front of the verandas of their houses beside the road would often pass comments on you. But the naughty boys of Garh Narikel will consciously go through that village. But the disciplined ones pass through the road beside this Buchiya pond. Although the route is circuitous; it is safe, do not mind.

There is one more pond in this village.

Towards the eastern side of the village, to control these two rivers Kamla and Balan, two dams were built. One is in the north-south direction, adjacent to the village and towards the eastern direction. If you move forward towards that dam, you will find the Kamla River, and then her brother the Balan River. And further towards the eastern direction, you will find another dam in the north-south direction. And between these two enclosures lies the Balli pond- in the name of a zamindar. Near this pond was a large football field. Due to siltation and due to some wrongdoing by the zamindar, this pond and that field got merged in the name of chakbandi (bringing together lands of one person at one place through mutual- often forced- exchange). The government had emphasized the chakbandi for some unknown reason, perhaps because it increases food production. The land owned by the Surju Bhai, filled with cattle dung and therefore very fertile, merged with Yellow Boy

(Piyar Bachcha)'s land due to this chakbandi. In between the dams, there is a grazing field called Bauwa Chauri, used by the herder to graze their cattle. The cattle grazers come here, play here, and swim in the Kamla River. Sometimes they let their body flow in the Kamla River and sometimes they swim against the stream of the river. Between the dams, there is one-quarter of the village, the quarters of milkmen. Earlier it was part of the village but now their voter list has been shifted to Jhanjharpur Bazaar. Long long ago, at the village school, there was a voting booth. These people were not allowed to vote at that booth, now it is the other way around.

Some of the graduates of Bauwa Chauri- as they are called jocularly- work in Delhi and Mumbai and some of them work in Saudia (Saudi Arab and Middle East). Some of them are security guards and some of them have started a firm that deals in security guard services.

In the village there are many mango orchards; the big orchard, the Kharhori (near to the habitations) where new trees had been planted, the Bhorha (near the abandoned course of a river) orchard; and the orchards over the mounds of the ponds. Earlier in Kharhori, there was agricultural land only. But once a person planted trees on his land it brought a shadow to other people's land. So, the other

people's production of paddy diminished. For some time, he talked about the mischievousness of his neighbour, but he had to plant mango trees too in his land later.
There is also an orchard of rose apples, all the sky-high trees there. The Pepper trees are all around, at the village deity's place and the school compound; you will find the root of the pepper tree here and the branches of the roots all around the place.

Beside the village, roads are trees of wild betel nuts, many types of shrubs used to clean teeth, the bamboo plantation, several types of flowers and thorns, and the sensitive plant, everywhere in all the orchards. Over the broad mango branches, the guards put their beds and slept. But there is only one banyan tree, beside the black metal road near the quarters of Muslims.
The lands are of diverse types. The land between the river dams and the sandy land is now being called the other-side land by the people. A creeper *tricosanthes dioica*, the watermelon, musk melon, sweet root; the cultivation of all these is done here. If you want to buy the cheapest land, then come here. But after the flood recedes, you will find the shape and size of the boundaries of your land changed. If in one year, after the flood, the shape and size of the boundary diminish, there is no need

of inciting any quarrel, as the goddess Kamla River might increase the area the very next year. The cultivation of paddy is also in existence. But that is often by chance, in some year even after sowing thrice it would be swiped away by the flood every time, but in some years the goddess Kamla River would fill so much fertile mud that whatever per Katha production you are expecting, it would produce even more than that.

If you have a good budget, then buy the land near the habitations or the white teak trees. Here people are buying land more for residence than for cultivation.

The land near the Dakahi pond is called Barhamottar. In the old days, some might have received this free land from the King. In the old days, it is heard, these lands had good production, but now a day these remain always filled with water. The paddy seeds are thrown (different from the usual method of sowing the saplings, it, however, results in less production) and paddy is cultivated in this manner in these lands.

The big plots, near the roads, near the Bhorha (besides the abandoned river course) and near the Purnaha (in the midfield) are used for cultivation. Besides some people have started cultivation on the curved land of the village enclosure near the dams. In geography books terrace cultivation is

said to be practised only on hills, here you will find terrace cultivation in plains on fabricated hills.

The weeping sound of people, whose milk-giving buffalo just died, can be heard often. The magical obsession can also be seen. Often some mischievous lads throw flowers and unbroken rice, worshipped by a magic man or woman, during the night at somebody's gate. It often leads to a string of abuses by the offended household, who thinks that some bad omen is going to grip their family. But the people have come to understand now that it remains the work of some naughty boys.

Agriculture-fishing-animal husbandry-based cattle grazer Brahmin dominated village is surrounded by literate (although a thief quarter also exists in this literate village), not that much literate; and a subdued and calm village (subdued and calm village=where people acquiesce to pressure). However, neighbourhood thieves do not dare to do theft in this village. If you have a social relationship in this village then all the old disputes in respect of land would stand settled. Ordinary people get transformed into strong ones, with a social relationship established through a marriage relationship. After the relationship, the weak ones turn into ones who have a say in society. From this village, the arms-wielding trouble shooters visit far-off places for settling disputes. These troubleshooters settle the disputes of relatives and

forcibly capture election booths. The rate of land in this village is Rupees twenty-five thousand per Katha (1/20th of a bigha) but the same type of land in a neighbouring village is available at a cheaper rate, say at Rupees ten thousand per Katha. The highlands in this village are cheaper because one cannot irrigate them with rainwater. But after these dams were built, the cost of land for those monkey-shaped people also increased. Earlier the mediators of marriage, even after seeing that a boy is getting his share of only ten Katha in comparison to monkey-shaped people's village boy getting one bigha, preferred boy of this village for marriage. Because in the village of those monkeys shaped people, subsistence is not possible even if the boy has ten bighas of land as his share. But the key to luck has now been unfolded to them; when the flood comes their highlands get irrigated. Monkey shaped...you did not understand? The orchards of that village are inhabited by monkeys, and the people of that village also look yellowish, the same as the monkeys! Monkeyish (yellow-like monkeys)! And nobody liked the job of a teacher, so all these monkey-shaped village people became teachers. And now look at the salary of the teachers. All monkey-shaped people, when they come out, wearing Dhoti (loincloth) then people of this village get crazy out of envy.

However, the Durga worship did not begin in this village. The submissive-village people also started it. If we try, how it is not possible? We did organise Ramlila (acts of Lord Ram performed by a theatre troupe), is it a fact or not? But look, the roads started smelling of people's urine. We are lucky that Durga Pooja is not celebrated in this village. One will have to bring one's daughters during the celebration time, and the cohesion that these villagers have among themselves would break the party politics related to the Pooja brings.

The village is, however, of cattle-grazing Brahmins. Among the Brahmins of the village are Indrakant Mishra, Raman Kishor Jha and Arun Jha. On the day of the Sukhrati festival (on the next day of the Deepawali festival, the festival of Hindus of Mithila) if you ever see the sport played by the buffalos of these cattle grazer Brahmins, you will lose interest in the game of polo. The pig purchased from the Dom caste of Samiya village is placed before the buffalos, drunk with cannabis drink. The cattle grazers who are sitting over the buffalo in the Central portion of the animal is an amazing scene to watch. In this village, there are other castes too.

Between the dams, on the high mound is the quarter of milkmen. Even during the flood this quarter of the village is never touched by flood water. Transportation during those days is by boat.

The rowers of the boat inside Kamla are not the people from the fishing community but those from the milkman caste. They receive grain from the villagers for their services. Yes, but people of other villages are charged in cash for the services.
There is one Muslim quarter in the village, they are in the vegetable business, but they do not grow vegetables but only sell them. In that quarter lives Mohammad Shamsul. His son lives in Saudia. This quarter is near the black metal road on the outskirts of the village. The people of this quarter of the village have registered their names in the voter list of the adjacent village. Near that quarters are four families of the Dom caste. The reason for enrolling themselves in the voter list of an adjacent village by these people is the same as it was for the people of milkman's quarter. But the villages are not made up of the voter list. So, these two quarters are still a part of this village. The necessity of Dom caste in festivals is well known. The Dom Caste makes all types of articles from bamboo, like the one for storage of grains and articles, and the bamboo fans. A Muslim quarter is also in the village. They are required, particularly for meat for the marriage party or the guests. The head of the poor animal is taken by the Durga Pooja Committee after the holy sacrifice ceremony for goddess Durga is over. In the off-season, the Muslims cut half the throat of the

castrated he-goat. But after cutting the meat, they take the head and the skins in place of their wages. When these cattle grazer Brahmins sing the devotional songs in front of the Hanumanji temple and perform twenty-four-hour non-stop worship at the temple, those drums which are used during the ceremony are made of those skins.

And again, there is Dhanukh-Toli. Bhagwandutt Mandal and Adhiklal Mandal are from the quarters of the Dhanukh caste. Earlier those people carried the gifts to other villages carrying a special bamboo stick on their shoulders, having two strings on the two sides. But now this work is undertaken by the people from the Dusadh caste also. Agriculture is the avocation of people from the Dhanukh quarters and Dusadh quarters. Yes, earlier these people worked as workers, but now they work on a co-sharing basis. In times of strife, there is not a single month when you will not find ladies from these quarters of the village wielding blackened earthen utensils and displaying these to the cattle grazer Brahmins. These people may be said to practice animal husbandry, as far as the rearing of a she-goat and an uncastrated he-goat is concerned, the latter is used for sacrifice to the goddess Durga. Some of them have begun keeping one ox and turn by turn these people do plough and other agriculture work by coupling their oxen together.

Even though it consists of only three houses, the

small quarters of washermen have become a separate quarter of the village. The clothes of even Marwaris (businesspeople originally from Rajasthan settled here) of Jhanjharpur town are cleaned here. The cattle grazer Brahmins go to marriage parties wearing these flashy full pants, these are not their own, these are costly clothes of those Marwaris and lent by the washermen. The washermen give these clothes on rent for two days, the clothes of the Marwaris.

Korail, Budhan and Domi Safi are washermen. Domi Safi is now Domi Das, he practices the sect of Saint Kabir now.

A quarter of barbers also consist of just three families. Jayaram Thakur, Lakshmi Thakur and Maley Thakur, all barbers are talkative. With them always remains the list of annual donations that each family must give to these families of barbers in place of the services that these barbers provide throughout the year. They are always on the run, to claim their labour, whenever a person comes to the village from town. Whoever comes during Durga Pooja from their far-off working place, must pay their due before their return to their workplace. Earlier, these barbers went from one corridor of the village to another for haircutting. But now whoever wants a shave of his head or face will have to go to the barber's house. Yes, but if it is the marriage of a

son then they go to the corridor of the bridegroom to shave the people who are going to attend the marriage party, but he sits in one place only. Whoever is there should remain in line. It should not be like that one is coming now, and another is coming after a while. Now one from each of the family of barbers has started a saloon at Jhanjharpur. A saloon is a plastic cover placed over the bamboo pillars beside the railway track. The use of nail-pairer is almost extinct. The individuals should cut the nail themselves. During the period of condolence, after the death of a person belonging to the same clan, the wife of the barber would cut the nail of the lady, only that. And while shaving a beard with a sharpened razor, if blood comes out, it would be not due to the wrong movement of the razor but as it would be because there was some blister there on the face. No dear, this razor using the topaz safety blade is for my Jhanjharpur saloon. There are other quarters of the village, of leather tanners. Mukhdev Ram and Kapildev Ram are prominent among them. Earlier they were residing outside the boundary of the village, beyond the bamboo plantations. But now the bamboo had been cut extensively, so it has thinned. The habitation of people has extended up to these quarters of the leather tanners. The construction of new buildings and the placement of bricks here and there is a normal scene. Announcing with the drum

to ward off evil spirits or to announce something, and to play drum and pipes are the works undertaken by them. If cattle die, till it is lifted by them, people are in the grip of condolence of death; people can neither eat nor bath.

Among the carpenters, the most respected in the village Garh Narikel is the family of Joginder Thakur. But when the titular head of the carpenters comes from the far-off village, then the intelligence of Joginder Thakur goes dim, and he utters only yes on both righteous and unrighteous utterances. Joginder has three sons, Bihari, Arjun and Shivanarayan. All are engaged in woodwork, but Bihari does ironwork too; and Arjun has become cycle-mechanic, side by side. He does all the work from minor repairs of rickshaws as well as bicycles and repairs punctured tubes. He has discovered the making of a cricket ball made of the root of bamboo; he has discovered a wooden circular plate to run through a crooked spike of iron wire; and many more games. So, when people say, look, if you read and write you would get a job; this exception should change their views. Look at Shivnarayan, how innovative he is, he makes many things even out of useless inappropriate wood. But the hand skill of Bihari is nowhere to be found, distinct types of cuts, vertical, horizontal, crooked, and oblique cuts, he is an expert in all.

Shivnarayan discovers, but Bihari replicates those discoveries in a better way. In villages, there is no copyright available to a discoverer. On hardwood the saw and other implements of Shivnarayan get blunt, but Bihari gets out of it, not knowing how! He makes something out of weak wood and sells those in the market. For sawing a plank if a big saw is not available, he even saws the plank using the smallest available saw. He delineates the sturdy wood from the weak wood meticulously and dexterously.

Jagdish Mile is known for the holy cloth manufacturing, which is offered to the goddess. His wife is very skilled.

Bhola Pandit is a potter, he moulds and makes earthen vessels, and he makes earthen birds and earthen animals for the children too. In the making of earthen utensils, he is unparalleled.

Satyanarayan Yadav is the Raut Sir. Now the nomenclature has changed from milkman to Yadav Sir. From the trade of milk to agriculture and to filling the village road with earthwork, all these are in his hands.

Basu Chaupal is from Khatbe Caste, he carries gifts to other villages, and gifts include fish. He sells fish in the fish market.

Chalittar Sahu and Laddulal Sahu, both are sweet manufacturers, they arranged for a temporary shop during the Durga Pooja festival. During jovial festivities or the feast related to death or death

anniversaries, he gets a contract for the preparation of vegetable dishes.

Shiv Narayan Mahto is from the Suri caste, a business class.

Laxmi Das is from the Tatma community, a thread-weaving caste.

Lal Kumar Roy is from Kurmi Caste.

Bhola Paswan and Mukesh Paswan are from Dusadh Caste, earlier the milk business was held by them, but not now.

Satyanarayan Kamti is from the Keot caste, they were stationed at the farmhouses of the Darbhanga Raj. Ramdeo Bhandari is from the Bhandari caste, this caste is a type of Keot caste, and they managed the Kitchen of Darbhanga Raj.

Kapileshwar Raut and Ramavtar Raut are from the Barai caste, they do ancestral betel-leaf business.

From the Dom caste is Bodha Malik, from the Koir caste is Dukhan Mahto, from the Bhumihar caste is Radhamohan Roy; and from the goldsmith caste, is Ashok Thakur.

Among the oil business community are Ramchandra Sao, Bauku Sao and Kari Sao.

From the fisher caste, is Jibachh Mukhiya. In Dakahi pond, once a year is held the fish catching fair. The fisher put the big net into the pond; a whole quarter of the fishers come to the pond for one whole month. Earlier the fair was extended for more than

one month but now due to the scarcity of fish, it goes hardly over twenty days. Then the head of the fisher announces- Now the big fishes are no more in this pond. If we fish through the big net, none could be entrapped. But if we fish through the delicate small nets, all the small fish would get caught. And then you will have to sow fish seeds into this pond.

During those fifteen to twenty days, there remains a festival-like atmosphere in the village. This becomes an excuse for the cleanliness of the pond. From early morning from four AM till noon, fish are caught. And till the afternoon all the villagers- except the southern quarters of the village- are given their share. All the people, the representatives from different quarters, take their share and return to their respective quarters. All the families obtain their shares out of the share of their quarters. How many shares are there out of the quarter's share, sometimes it gives cause for strife. Till she was alive, one did not talk to one's widow aunt, but after her death people remember their aunt. Maybe while she was alive, her desire to offer some share to her daughter might have been stalled by the nephew and he might have obtained a thumb impression of her dead aunt that becomes immaterial now. On this count, strife ensues, and only the wrestler whom people out of love call wrestler uncle, receives that kind of share, nobody

else. It does not matter whether this widow, of wrestler uncle's courtyard, died a long twenty years ago.

There is one more speciality of Dakahi pond. Inside this pond tortoises and fishes grow in number, on their own. Beside the pond, many types of roots and lichens are found. The cattle grazer boys eat the sweet roots.

Buchkan Saday is from Mushhar caste. Near the Dakahi pond, there are many small water bodies, and the swampy ground may be seen around it. From there the Mushhar caste people dig the roots and eat them. In the year 1967 when most of the ponds dried, even then this big Dakahi pond did not completely dry up, although the area of the pond diminished dramatically. The Prime Minister had come here during those days, and she was shown how the Mushahar caste was surviving during those days, eating these roots.

These are the people who are having a say in the village of Garh Narikel.

But the village is known as Cattle Grazer Brahmin's village.

पर्वत ऊपर भमरा जे सूतल

র্বত ঊপৰ ভমৰা জে সূতলপৰ্বত ঊপৰ ভমৰা জে সূতল পৰ্বত ঊপৰ ভমৰা জে সূতল

গজেন্দ্র ঠাকুৰ গজেন্দ্র ঠাকুৰ গজেন্দ্র ঠাকুৰ



गजेन्द्र ठाकुर

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